

Amendments to the claims:

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in this application:

1. (Currently Amended) A tampon applicator comprising:

a barrel adapted to house a pledget therein and to receive a plunger therein, said barrel having a fingergrip area adapted to partially house and engage said plunger, said fingergrip area having at least one substantially flattened surface, said at least one substantially flattened surface having [with] at least one gripping structure other than a plurality of ribs or treads [selected from the group consisting of embossments other than ribs, slits, perforations, lances, pressure sensitive adhesive, and any combinations thereof], wherein said fingergrip area has a reduced diameter relative to said barrel,

wherein said at least one substantially flattened surface and said at least one gripping structure provide gripping ability to overcome ejection forces applied to said barrel by said pledget and/or said plunger.

2. (Original) The tampon applicator of claim 1, wherein

said fingergrip area comprises at least one pair of diametrically opposed, substantially flattened surfaces.

3. (Original) The tampon applicator of claim 1, wherein said fingergrip area comprises an odd number of substantially flattened surfaces, and wherein at least one of said substantially flattened surfaces is diametrically opposed to a pair of adjoining substantially flattened surfaces.

4. (Original) The tampon applicator of claim 1, wherein said fingergrip area further comprises at least two angled shoulder surfaces.

5. (Previously Presented) The tampon applicator of claim 4, wherein said at least one substantially flattened surface is at least two substantially flattened surfaces, and wherein each of said at least two angled shoulder surfaces are disposed adjacent to each of said at least two substantially flattened surfaces on said fingergrip area.

6. (Canceled).

7. (Currently Amended) The tampon applicator of claim 1, wherein said at least one gripping structure has a top in a

plane that is raised above a plane having said at least one substantially flattened surface.

8. (Original) The tampon applicator of claim 1, wherein said at least one gripping structure is depressed below said at least one substantially flattened surface.

9. (Original) The tampon applicator of claim 1, wherein said at least one gripping structure is aligned with an outer surface of said at least one substantially flattened surface.

10. (Previously Presented) The tampon applicator of claim 1, wherein said at least one gripping structure has a position selected from the group consisting of tilted towards an outer surface of said at least one substantially flattened surface, tilted away from an outer surface of said at least one substantially flattened surface, and any combination thereof.

11. (Previously Presented) The tampon applicator of claim 1, wherein the tampon applicator further comprises a plunger, and wherein said plunger and said fingergrip area have substantially the same cross-sectional shape.

12. (Original) The tampon applicator of claim 11, wherein

said cross-sectional shape is selected from the group consisting of: rectangular, square, triangular, or hexagonal.

13. (Currently Amended) A tampon applicator comprising:
a barrel adapted to house a pledget therein and to receive a plunger therein, said barrel having a fingergrip area adapted to partially house and engage said plunger, said fingergrip area having at least one convex gripping surface, said at least one convex gripping surface having [with] at least one gripping structure other than a plurality of ribs or treads, wherein said fingergrip area has a reduced diameter relative to said barrel,

wherein said at least one convex gripping surface and said at least one gripping structure provide gripping ability to overcome ejection forces applied to said barrel by said pledget and/or said plunger.

14. (Previously Presented) The tampon applicator of claim 13, wherein said fingergrip area comprises at least one pair of diametrically opposed, convex gripping surfaces.

15. (Previously Presented) The tampon applicator of claim 13, wherein said fingergrip area comprises an odd number of convex gripping surfaces, and wherein at least one of said

convex gripping surfaces is diametrically opposed to a pair of adjoined convex gripping surfaces.

16. (Original) The tampon applicator of claim 13, wherein said fingergrip area further comprises at least two angled shoulder surfaces.

17. (Previously Presented) The tampon applicator of claim 16, wherein said at least one convex gripping surface is at least two convex gripping surfaces, and wherein each of said at least two angled shoulder surfaces are disposed adjacent to each of said at least two convex gripping surfaces on said fingergrip area.

18. (Previously Presented) The tampon applicator of claim 13, wherein said at least one gripping structure is selected from the group consisting of embossments, protuberances, slits, grooves, louvers, perforations, lances, abrasive media, high wet coefficient of friction materials, pressure sensitive adhesives, and any combinations thereof.

19. (Currently Amended) A tampon applicator comprising:

a barrel adapted to house a pledget therein and to receive

a plunger therein, said barrel having a fingergrip area adapted to partially house and engage said plunger, said fingergrip area having at least one concave gripping surface, said at least one concave gripping surface having [with] at least one gripping structure other than a plurality of ribs or treads [selected from the group consisting of embossments, slits, perforations, lances, pressure sensitive adhesives and any combinations thereof], wherein said fingergrip area has a reduced diameter relative to said barrel,

wherein said at least one concave gripping surface and said at least one gripping structure provide gripping ability to overcome ejection forces applied to said barrel by said pledget and/or said plunger.

20. (Previously Presented) The tampon applicator of claim 19, wherein said fingergrip area comprises at least one pair of diametrically opposed, concave gripping surfaces.

21. (Previously Presented) The tampon applicator of claim 19, wherein said fingergrip area comprises an odd number of concave gripping surfaces, and wherein at least one of said concave gripping surfaces is diametrically opposed to a pair of adjoining concave gripping surfaces.

22. (Original) The tampon applicator of claim 19, wherein said fingergrip area further comprises at least two angled shoulder surfaces.

23. (Previously Presented) The tampon applicator of claim 22, wherein said at least one concave gripping surface is at least two concave gripping surfaces, and wherein each of said at least two angled shoulder surfaces are disposed adjacent to each of said at least two concave gripping surfaces on said fingergrip area.

24. (Canceled).

25. (Previously Presented) A tampon applicator comprising:

a barrel adapted to house a pledget therein and to receive a plunger therein, said barrel having a fingergrip area adapted to partially house and engage said plunger, said fingergrip area having an odd number of substantially flattened surfaces with at least one gripping structure selected from the group consisting of embossments, slits, perforations, lances, pressure sensitive adhesive, and any combinations thereof, wherein said fingergrip area has a reduced diameter relative to said barrel,

wherein at least one of said substantially flattened surfaces is diametrically opposed to a pair of adjoined substantially flattened surfaces, and

wherein said odd number of substantially flattened surfaces and said at least one gripping structure provide gripping ability to overcome ejection forces applied to said barrel by said pledget and/or said plunger.

26. (Previously Presented) A tampon applicator comprising:

a barrel adapted to house a pledget therein and to receive a plunger therein, said barrel having a fingergrip area adapted to partially house and engage said plunger, said fingergrip area having at least one substantially flattened surface with at least one gripping structure selected from the group consisting of embossments, slits, perforations, lances, pressure sensitive adhesive, and any combinations thereof, wherein said fingergrip area has a reduced diameter relative to said barrel,

wherein said at least one gripping structure is depressed below said at least one substantially flattened surface, and

wherein said at least one substantially flattened surface and said at least one gripping structure provide gripping ability to overcome ejection forces applied to said barrel by said pledget and/or said plunger.

27. (Previously Presented) A tampon applicator comprising:

a barrel adapted to house a pledget therein and to receive a plunger therein, said barrel having a fingergrip area adapted to partially house and engage said plunger, said fingergrip area having an odd number of convex gripping surfaces with at least one gripping structure, wherein said fingergrip area has a reduced diameter relative to said barrel,

wherein at least one of said convex surfaces is diametrically opposed to a pair of adjoined convex surfaces, and

wherein said odd number of convex gripping surfaces and said at least one gripping structure provide gripping ability to overcome ejection forces applied to said barrel by said pledget and/or said plunger.

28. (Previously Presented) A tampon applicator comprising:

a barrel adapted to house a pledget therein and to receive a plunger therein, said barrel having a fingergrip area adapted to partially house and engage said plunger, said fingergrip area having an odd number of concave gripping surfaces with at least one gripping structure selected from the group consisting of embossments, slits, perforations, lances, pressure sensitive adhesives, and any combinations thereof, wherein said fingergrip area has a reduced diameter relative to said barrel,

wherein at least one of said concave gripping surfaces is diametrically opposed to a pair of adjoined concave gripping surfaces, and

wherein said odd number of concave gripping surfaces and said at least one gripping structure provide gripping ability to overcome ejection forces applied to said barrel by said pledget and/or said plunger.

29 (New) The tampon applicator of claim 1, wherein said at least one gripping structure further comprises a plurality of ribs or treads.

30. (New) The tampon applicator of claim 1, wherein said at least one gripping structure is patterned.

31. (New) The tampon applicator of claim 13, wherein said at least one gripping structure further comprises a plurality of ribs or treads.

32. (New) The tampon applicator of claim 13, wherein said at least one gripping structure is patterned.

33. (New) The tampon applicator of claim 19, wherein said at least one gripping structure further comprises a plurality of ribs or treads.

34. (New) The tampon applicator of claim 19, wherein said at least one gripping structure is patterned.